

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

APRIL 28, 1858.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. MASON made the following

REPORT.

[To accompany Joint Resolution S. 33.]

The Committee on Foreign Relations, to whom was referred the letter of the Secretary of the Navy of the 21st inst., and the correspondence accompanying it, containing information of the condition of the United States ship Susquehanna on her late arrival at Port Royal, in the Island of Jamaica, having the yellow fever on board, and of the reception and assistance extended to the officers and crew by the British naval authorities of that island, communicated to the Senate pursuant to their resolution of the 19th April, have had the same under consideration, and now report:

It appears from these documents that the United States ship Susquehanna, having on board one hundred and three cases of yellow fever of the most malignant type, including officers, engineers, and seamen, arrived at Port Royal, Jamaica, at 8 o'clock p. m., on the 5th of April. As soon as the condition of the ship was made known to Admiral Sir Houston Stewart, commanding the British naval forces on that station, the most prompt and efficient measures were taken by him at once for the relief of the infected ship. Orders were issued, and carried into immediate execution, to prepare ample accommodation for the sick at the naval hospital of the port. Surgeons volunteered, in addition to the hospital corps, and with nurses and other necessary attendants were directed to be in readiness to receive them; and so speedily were all these preparations made, that at 6 o'clock the next morning they commenced landing the sick and conveying them to the hospital; in which service they were assisted by the boats of the British squadron, bringing with them cots for the accommodation and comfort of the sick.

In speaking of it, Captain Sands says:

"I cannot find words to express my sense of obligation to Admiral Stewart, for the kind and prompt manner in which he placed the royal naval hospital at our disposal, and furnished us with every convenience for landing the sick; nor to Dr. Kinnear, deputy medical inspector, and the medical officers under him, for their attention to the comforts of those placed under their charge. I also take great

pleasure in mentioning that Commodore Kellett and Captain Hay, of the *Indus*, came to offer their assistance, with boats and cots to land the sick."

Captain Sands also adds:

"As I had but one surgeon left, and fearing he might also fall sick during the passage home, I applied to Admiral Stewart for a medical officer, and, previous to our departure from Port Royal, he sent us Assistant Surgeon Rose, who kindly volunteered his services."

It appears that seventy-nine of the crew and six officers, making eighty-five in all, were thus confided to the generous hospitality and care of the British naval authorities at Jamaica, and were left there when the *Susquehanna* sailed for the United States. And your committee do not doubt that to this prompt and efficient relief the country will be indebted for many valuable lives saved for its future service.

They append to this report, along with the official correspondence of Captain Sands, a letter addressed to the chairman of the committee by Lieutenant S. Ledyard Phelps, (one of the officers of the *Susquehanna*), in reply to a letter of inquiry addressed to him by the chairman, as more full in its detail than the official correspondence permitted.

And as, in the opinion of the committee, eminently due and becoming the occasion, they recommend the adoption of the accompanying joint resolution.

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *April 21, 1858.*

SIR: In reply to the resolution of the Senate of April 19, 1858, directing the Secretary of the Navy "to communicate to the Senate copies of any correspondence or other papers containing information of the condition of the United States ship *Susquehanna*, on her late arrival at the Island of Jamaica, and of the reception and assistance extended to her officers and crew, disabled by sickness, by the naval and civil authorities of Great Britain at that island," I have the honor to transmit herewith copies of all the correspondence and information on the files of the department.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

ISAAC TOUCEY.

Hon. JOHN C. BRECKINRIDGE,
President of the Senate.

UNITED STATES SHIP *SUSQUEHANNA*,
New York Harbor, April 15, 1858.

SIR: I have the honor to report to you the arrival of this ship at New York, having had 155 cases of yellow fever on board, 85 of which were left at the hospital at Port Royal, Jamaica.

For the information of the honorable department I have to state that after lying over one hundred days in San Juan de Nicaragua, with an average sick list of about 15, the first case of fever made its appearance on the 17th ult.; then a second; then a third, when I thought it advisable to put to sea, hoping that a change of air would

dispel the disease. After a few days the ship returned off San Juan and anchored outside. She remained there three days, with some slight modification of the fever, but it again broke out with greater violence. I then got under way and stood towards Aspinwall, expecting to meet the Jamestown, Commander Kennedy, whom I had instructed to relieve us on the 1st of April; this ship to take her place, thinking that a change of position might be favorable to the health of both ships. On our way down to Aspinwall fresh cases continued to occur, particularly among the lieutenants and engineers, the first and second of the former being down and others complaining. I now determined, at the suggestion of the *surgeon*, to steer for Pensacola. After standing for that port for some hours, and the fever continuing to extend its ravages, there being nearly one hundred down, at the request of the surgeon, I changed our course for the Island of Jamaica, where I arrived about 8 o'clock in the evening of the 5th of April.

The admiral of the port, Sir Hewston Stewart, on hearing of our condition, kindly placed the naval hospital at our disposal, and at 6 o'clock the next morning we landed 63 of our sick. I then had to take coal and water on board at Kingston, which detained us a part of three days. The ship being now disabled—three lieutenants and six engineers being sick, besides half the firemen and coal heavers and many of the most valuable of the men off duty—I shipped about 30 negroes, and, agreeably to the recommendation of the surgeon, I deemed it advisable to proceed at once to a northern port.

The whole number of cases, from the 17th of March to the 15th of April, were 155, 85 of which were left at the hospital at Port Royal, Jamaica. There remains on the list to-day 34 cases. We have had, in all, 16 deaths; among these was First Lieutenant Queen, of the marine corps.

Lieutenant Howell and four engineers were left at the hospital, doing, I hope, well.

Since leaving Port Royal, we have had two deaths and some addition to the number of cases; but generally, on approaching a colder climate, all seem to improve, and we have had no new cases for the last forty-eight hours.

I beg leave to forward three letters from Surgeon Pinkney, who was taken down in the commencement of the epidemic; also, one from Passed Assistant Surgeon Maccoun, from whom I have received the most valuable services during this severe visitation. As I had but one surgeon left, and fearing he might also fall sick during the passage home, I applied to Admiral Stewart for a medical officer; and, previous to our departure from Port Royal, he sent us Assistant Surgeon Rose, who kindly volunteered his services.

I cannot find words to express my sense of obligation to Admiral Stewart for the kind and prompt manner in which he placed the royal naval hospital at our disposal, and furnished us with every convenience for landing the sick; nor to Doctor Kinnear, deputy medical inspector, and the medical officers under him, for their attention to the comforts of those placed under their charge.

I also take great pleasure in mentioning that Commodore Kellett

and Captain Hay, of the Indus, came to offer their assistance, with boats and cots to land the sick.

I have left instructions with Mr. Harrison, our consul at Kingston, relative to the sick at the hospital, and have drawn a bill on the Navy Department in his favor for \$1,500, to cover any necessary expenses that might occur until further instructions should be received from the department.

I have only to add my great regret at being obliged to leave my station without instructions from the department; but the circumstances of the case rendered it absolutely necessary.

I have the honor to be your most obedient servant,

JOSHUA R. SANDS,
Captain United States Navy.

Hon. ISAAC TOUCEY,
Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.

UNITED STATES STEAM FRIGATE SUSQUEHANNA,
San Juan Del Norte, March 2, 1858.

SIR: In consequence of three deaths having suddenly occurred on board this ship in the brief space of four days, and another of the crew being extremely ill, it becomes my duty to recommend that you leave this port and cruise outside. The disease, at present, is a marked one, and I am unable to define its true character. I am fearful, however, that we are threatened with an epidemic fever. Cruising outside will tend towards the free ventilation of the ship—a matter of great importance. It will also enable us to separate the sick from the well.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

NINIAN PINKNEY,
Surgeon United States Navy.

Captain J. R. SANDS,
Senior Captain Home Squadron, San Juan Del Norte.

UNITED STATES FRIGATE SUSQUEHANNA,
Off San Juan Del Norte, March 31, 1858.

SIR: During the five days we cruised off San Juan there was a modification in the cases admitted. Since, however, we returned and anchored outside of the port of San Juan, the disease has become aggravated, and the sick list has rapidly increased. I would, therefore, recommend you to proceed at once to Aspinwall, in order to take in coal, so as to enable you to go Pensacola, where the sick can have hospital treatment.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

NINIAN PINKNEY,
Surgeon United States Navy.

Captain J. R. SANDS,
Senior Captain Home Squadron, off San Juan Del Norte.

UNITED STATES SHIP SUSQUEHANNA,
Off Port Royal, Jamaica, April 7, 1858.

SIR: Availing ourselves of the permission so kindly granted us by Admiral Sir H. Stewart, we have sent some seventy-three cases to the hospital at Port Royal. The epidemic continues to rage with unabated fury, the average number during the last thirteen hours being at the rate of one per hour.

It is all important that we should leave this port at the earliest hour practicable, so soon as you shall have taken the coal on board. I would recommend you to proceed to a northern port. I make this recommendation upon a careful consideration of all the circumstances by which we are surrounded. The sooner we make a northern climate the quicker will the epidemic be arrested. I would, therefore, impress upon you the importance of proceeding as rapidly as possible to either one of the following ports: New York, Norfolk, or Boston. In many respects I should give preference to New York.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

N. PINKNEY,
Surgeon United States Navy.

Captain J. R. SANDS,
Com'g U. S. Frigate Susquehanna, off Port Royal, Jamaica.

UNITED STATES FRIGATE SUSQUEHANNA,
At Sea, April 2, 1858.

SIR: The disease with which we have to contend is yellow fever. One of the crew is in a dying state; he was seized with black vomit this morning; the epidemic is increasing and becoming more aggravated. Of the ward room officers there are on the list Lieutenants Brown, Queen, and Hamilton. Steerage officers: Assistant Engineer Grier, Henderson, King, and Robie. Forward officers: William Loughton, carpenter, Mr. Gallagher, sail-maker. I would recommend you to proceed forthwith to Jamaica, and having taken in coal there, to go to some port in the United States.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

NINIAN PINKNEY,
Surgeon United States Navy.

Captain J. R. SANDS,
Senior Captain Home Squadron, at Sea.

U. S. STEAM FRIGATE SUSQUEHANNA,
At Sea, April 5, 1858.

SIR: As the severe epidemic with which we are visited does not abate, and our sick list has increased to 97 cases, (many of which are of a very serious nature, and require more care and nursing than can possibly be given to them on board ship,) I would advise that the

worst cases should be immediately removed to the hospital upon our arrival at Port Royal, Jamaica.

In order to stop the progress of the disease, I would strongly recommend and urge that this ship should proceed to a northern station* as soon after her arrival in Port Royal as possible.

I am, sir, with much respect, your obedient servant,

ROBERT T. MACCOUN,

Passed Assistant Surgeon U. S. Navy.

Captain JOSHUA R. SANDS,

Commanding U. S. Steam Frigate Susquehanna.

UNITED STATES SHIP SUSQUEHANNA,

Harbor of New York, April 15, 1858.

SIR: As I consider the severe epidemic which has visited this ship has its origin in the unhealthy condition of her hold, and that every one is in danger who remains on board, I would respectfully recommend that the officers and men be removed from her as soon as possible.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

ROBERT T. MACCOUN,

Passed Assistant Surgeon.

Captain JOSHUA R. SANDS,

Commanding.

WASHINGTON, April 26, 1858.

DEAR SIR: I had the honor to receive, Saturday evening, your note requesting me to give you a statement of the circumstances under which we were received by the naval authorities at Port Royal, Jamaica, on our arrival there in the frigate Susquehanna, embracing the condition of the crew and what was done for their relief.

In replying, I shall endeavor to avoid giving way to feelings that naturally arise, on recalling the scenes on board, on the night of the 5th instant, and which might give an exaggerated tone to what should be a simple narrative of facts.

When on the night of the 1st instant, or morning of the 2d, it was determined that the ship must be taken north, her head was first turned towards Pensacola, via Old Providence island, where it was proposed to get coal; but before arriving there the sickness had spread to such an extent that the hospital stores of every description were giving out, and it was necessary to hasten to the nearest port where supplies could be obtained. The course of the ship was changed and all speed made for Port Royal, the nearest and, at the same time, for us, the best port in the West Indies.

To keep the ship in any degree ventilated in the close and hot atmosphere of that sea, it was necessary to furl the awnings over the

* Not south of New York.

principal hatchways, yet, between decks, the air was too foul and heated for the sick. The officers affected, two-thirds of all on board, were under an awning abaft the mizzen-mast, while the men were beneath the hurricane deck, (extending between the wheel houses,) and near the hatchways upon the berth deck. These places, affording cover from the sun and night dews, as well as the best ventilation it was possible to obtain, were the only spaces in the ship at all suitable for her suffering crew. These were crowded to a degree that greatly aggravated the disease. A foul and pestilential miasma rose from them, and, spreading over other parts of the vessel, poisoned the atmosphere and rendered it even offensive, while its effects were alike disastrous to the well and sick, accelerating the ratio of new cases, and increasing the violence of the disease. Men just taken were, of necessity, placed in the already crowded spaces occupied by those in more advanced stages of the disease, and where there was no escape from witnessing, upon every hand, distress, danger, and death, effects of the disease of which they themselves now suffered. Under such circumstances a large portion were rapidly approaching the last stage, the terrible "black vomit."

The "Susquehanna" anchored at Port Royal at 8 p. m. on the 5th instant, having on board 103 cases, in every stage of the yellow fever. The officer of the visiting boat, from Admiral Sir Houston Stewart's flag-ship, was told of the condition of our ship. He returned to inform his commander, who was in the midst of a ball on board, given as a parting entertainment to friends in Kingston. *At once* every assistance it was possible to render us was most generously extended by the admiral, by those under him, and by the surgeons of the hospital. A portion of this fine establishment was cleared of their sick, and prepared for the reception, at an early hour in the morning, of ours. Nurses and watchmen were procured to care for our people, while barges were got in readiness to remove them to the shore. In the morning boats came from the different vessels to tow to the point those in which our sick had been placed. Fifty-seven men and six officers were removed to the hospital. Subsequently, of new cases occurring in port, twenty-two others were sent; those cases more easily treated being retained on board.

Of the eighty-five left in Port Royal, it may be safely affirmed that one-half would have perished had they remained on board ship; but, under the skill and watchful attendance of the English surgeons, the excellent nursing, the comforts and conveniences of that fine hospital, and, in short, the unremitting care of every one about them, but few had died when we sailed, and a large portion were in a fair way of recovery. Water was sent to us by the admiral, that the benefit of a change in this might be tried. A wharf at the coal depot, Kingston, was cleared, in order that our ship might at once be taken there to get in the supply of fuel needed. It would have been impossible for the authorities to have manifested greater solicitude, or to have rendered more prompt, efficient, or generous aid. Only those who have been thus situated can fully understand how such kindness and sympathy can be appreciated. Without the aid thus promptly and generously afforded, it is my opinion that the *Susquehanna* could not have

been brought to the United States, unless by sending out another steamer to tow her.

Every exertion was made by us to stay the ravages of the disease. Things that had come in contact with the sick or dead were burned, disinfecting agents used, and all means adopted likely to be of service; but the epidemic progressed. Twelve and fourteen cases daily occurred among a number, less than two hundred, remaining well after the removal of the sick to the hospital; so that, after a few days, none were likely to remain well to guard the ship. The surgeon had the fever, and the assistant surgeon was in delicate health. Under such circumstances Assistant Surgeon Frederick H. Rose, royal navy, himself enjoying no immunity from the disease, volunteered his services on board for the passage to the United States, and the admiral expressed himself happy that he could permit one of his officers to follow his generous impulse and be useful to us.

It is only necessary that I should state these facts for you justly to appreciate his merit, as well as the kindness extended to us by the English officers at Jamaica; whence, favored by cool breezes and auspicious weather, we were enabled to bring the vessel into port under more favorable circumstances than could have been ordinarily anticipated.

I am, sir, respectfully, your obedient servant,

S. LEDYARD PHELPS,

Lieutenant United States Navy.

Hon. J. M. MASON, *United States Senate.*